

Paris Singer Apartment
356 Worth Avenue (The Everglades Club)
Palm Beach
Palm Beach County
Florida

HABS No. FLA-227

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50-PALM
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HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20243

THE PARIS SINGER APARTMENT

Location: 356 Worth Avenue (The Everglades Club), Palm Beach,
Palm Beach County, Florida.

Present Owner: The Everglades Protective Syndicate.

Present Occupant: Mrs. Earl Ross.

Present Use: Seasonal Rental Property (December 1 through April 30).

Significance: Important as the first interior space in the Florida Spanish revival style developed by Addison Mizner and made a prevailing influence by him in Florida and particularly in Palm Beach. The Everglades Club, in which the Paris Singer Apartment was created, is the first building in Mizner's Spanish style. It was the collaboration of Singer and Mizner that introduced the Spanish style to Palm Beach.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION [Refer to PART I of The Everglades Club, FLA-226.]PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The importance of this apartment which is one of several apartments incorporated into the original design of the Everglades Club lies in the fact that the owner, Paris Singer, was instrumental in bringing Addison Mizner, the architect for the club, to Palm Beach. This apartment was Mizner's first Spanish interior. It is notable for the simplicity of the sleeping spaces at the second level of the apartment.
2. Condition of fabric: Although the bedrooms are in good repair, the famous living room has been allowed to deteriorate in its present use as a storage, catch-all space, subdivided by temporary partitions.

B. Description of the Exterior:

[Refer to Description of the Exterior from Part I, The Everglades Club, HABS No. FLA-226.]

C. Description of the Interior:

1. Floor plans: This apartment occupies the second and third floors in the Everglades Club. The principal entry is by way of the grand stairway in the open North Loggia of the Marble Patio.

A small second-level foyer at this entrance leads directly into the grand living room which opens on the west to the dining room and service area. A stairway on the south wall leads directly up to the master bedroom, separated from a second bedroom by a sitting room, all in a line overlooking the marble patio of the Everglades Club. A doorway on the north wall of the sitting room opens to a public elevator hallway which serves other apartments within the Everglades Club.

2. Second-floor rooms:

- a. Foyer: The floor is of dark stained wood. Walls and ceilings are plastered. The ceiling is vaulted in both barrel and quadripartite vaults. The entrance doorway is trimmed in plain wood jambs set deep in the stuccoed exterior reveal. The 3'-7" x 6'-9" x 2" door is of dark varnished wood, richly decorated with high relief raised panels, 3-1/2" x 4", set in 5" wide doweled rails and mullions. These panels are arranged in rows of five vertical, four horizontal and five vertical above and below a cruciform panel surrounded by smaller vertical panels in the four quadrants. The high relief panels consist of small diamonds superimposed on rectangles. There is a hanging metal lamp in the room.
- b. Living room: The proportions and scale of this room are much enhanced by the relative simplicity of the details, compared to Mizner's later work. Ornamentation is reserved to a few elements. The varnished oak floor is surrounded by a border of dark hexagonal glazed tiles. It is 8'-2" wide.

At the southwest corner, a narrow stairway leads to the master bedroom on the third floor. The lower flight, 2'-4" wide, leads up 10 risers to a balconied landing. The second flight on the south wall is enclosed by a stepped arcade of four tall narrow bays defined by slender cast Corinthian columns with wrought-iron railing between. Treads, risers, and landing are of cast concrete with chamfered edges.

The pecky cypress ceiling is exposed above the joists which frame into two large transverse beams supported by two carved wood brackets. The chamfered edges of both joists and beams are scalloped. They are decorated in earth tones of green, ochre, cream and venetian red.

The double entry doors are wood paneled in alternating rows of twos and threes. Another door on the west wall contains decoratively carved inset panels. Also on this wall, near the stairs, are full-height double doors concealing a built-in bookcase. They are decorated with designs of flowers, vines and faces in green, pink, and cream. The door at the top of the stairs is eight-paneled with a simple trim.

Other living-room door trim is carved in a foliated design. On the south wall is a triple-arched opening within a cast rectangular ceiling-height frame. Each bay is formed at the top to simulate a Moorish-type arch, with the central cusp closing upon itself to form an almost complete circle. The bays of the opening are separated by slender cast columns with lotus-like capitals. This interior arrangement of columns and arches in the rectangular frame is repeated independently on the exterior wall so that the wood sash between the two is independent of both.

Above the column capitals is a glazed transom, its true rectangular shape being disguised by the cusped arches. It is 3'-6" high. In the exterior bays, below the transom, is a single sliding wood sash, 4'-0" wide by 8'-0". It contains leaded hexagonal lights, 4'-14", in amber, blue, and clear glass. Similar lights are in the transom. On the north and west walls, window openings are similar, except that there are only two wide bays defined in each rectangular frame. A single wood sash, 7'-6" x 8'-0", slides for half its width into a wall pocket. It is divided vertically by a 4" wide mullion. The vertical members of this single sash are made of 2-1/2" x 3-1/2" stock. Horizontal rails are 2-1/2" x 4". The deep concrete sills upon which the columns rest also serve as window seats.

The centrally placed fireplace on the east wall forms a focal point in the living room. A pair of engaged cast concrete columns on the face and on the sides support cast acanthus carved brackets, above which is a cast concrete entablature. Above the small-scaled architrave molding is a deep frieze containing two heraldic emblems. The cornice consists of a cable molding below the crown molding. A plastered chimneyhood slants up from this to the ceiling. The fireback and hearth are brick.

3. Third-floor rooms:

- a. Master bedroom suite: These rooms are treated simply and homogeneously. Floors are carpeted. Walls and ceilings are of painted plaster. There are no baseboards except in the small entry foyer and in the west bedroom. There are no cornice moldings, instead, however, a simple molded wood valence occurs over all doors and windows on the south wall. Doors between the sitting room and the bedrooms are paneled with linen-fold panels on both sides, being enriched in the sitting room with a scrolled molding in the panels. The 2-1/2" thick door to the hallway is ornately decorated within the panels by rectangles, squares, and semi-circles and starbursts in high relief. Although modern hardware has been installed in this door, it also contains an over-size keyhole. Handles are bronze.

The doors to closets and the efficiency kitchen are vee-joint vertical planks with wood dowels projecting in relief. Door trim is plain.

In the east wall off the master bedroom, there are French doors, 2'-0" x 8'-0" each, with eight lights, 9" x 12" over a plain wood panel. Above is a tri-partite fanlight. A wrought-iron railing is inserted between the jambs. The interior door trim is simple. On the exterior of the door a rectangular stuccoed panel surrounds the jambs and fanlight, with small-scaled Corinthian cast columns engaged at the jambs and a banded archivolt. Other French doors on the south wall of this suite lead to small wrought-iron balconies overlooking the marble patio below. They are 2'-0" x 6'-8" with ten 8" x 12" lights over plain wood panels. On the exterior they are set in plastered reveals, except at the sitting room. Here the fanlights are trimmed with painted glazed tiles. The balcony floors are concrete. Steps at the southeast corner of the building lead down to an intermediate concrete terrace and thence down broad steps to a lower terrace on the south paved with hexagonal tiles. This terrace with parapet wall also overlooks the marble patio or courtyard on the west.

- b. Moorish bathroom suite: Ornate decoration in this suite is reserved to the master bath. The glazed tile floor has a central field in green and white chevron pattern, bordered first by narrow black tiles, then an intermediate broader band, painted with acanthus and egg-and-dart designs, and finally a band of black tiles at the wall.

A decorative tile wainscot in three different patterns is below the white painted plaster walls and ceiling. In the center of the ceiling a glass skylight projects above the roof. An early photograph shows that originally a striped canvas tent and a chandelier of suspended oriental lamps hung below the skylight. These are no longer in place.

The vee-joint vertical plank door leading to the water closet contains a carved wood grille treated in gold-leafed oriental motifs.

The base and surround of the bathtub alcove are surfaced with the same decorative tiles of the wainscot. The tile pattern of the alcove walls is concentric diamonds. The cornice and upper part of the jambs of the alcove contain gold-leafed wood in oriental fretwork. Adjacent to the bathtub is the vanity-lavatory supported from the floor by two tiled arches. The splash and sides of the vanity are glazed tiles painted with circular medallions. The mirror above is flanked by two Greek-inspired sconces.

There are two built-in storage units, one with lattice and spindle doors. The second formerly contained a safe which has been replaced by shelving.

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PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Florida project to survey the historic architecture of Palm Beach and to emphasize written historical and architectural data was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in cooperation with the Palm Beach Historical Society and the Florida Board of Archives and History in the summer of 1971. Under the direction of James C. Massey, then Chief of HABS, the project was carried out in the Historic American Buildings Survey field office in the Flagler Museum, Whitehall Way, Palm Beach, with Professor Woodrow W. Wilkins, AIA (University of Miami) Project Supervisor; Richard C. Crisson, Architect (University of Florida); Richard High, Student Architect (Georgia Institute of Technology); and Bryan Bowman, Student Historian (University of Florida). Under the general direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS from March 1972, additional documentation was prepared and archival photographs for the project were taken in April 1972 by Jack E. Boucher, HABS photographer. Editing and final preparation of the documentation was carried out in the HABS Washington office by Lucy Pope Wheeler of the HABS professional staff.